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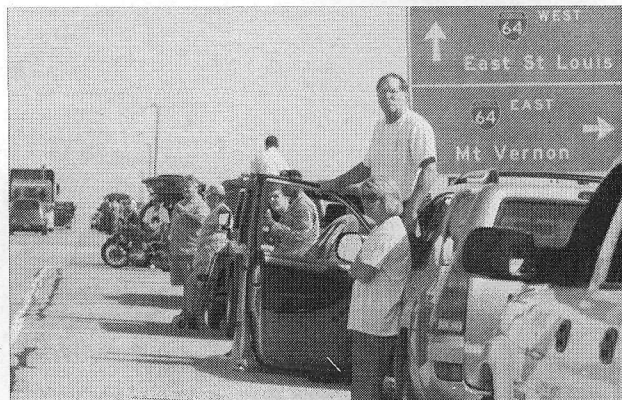
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BELLEVILLE NEWS-DEMOCRAT

Publication Date: 08/15/2008

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An overflow crowd of spectators, who didn't go into the airport, lined up along the shoulder of Illinois 4 east of the airport and watched the paratrooper demonstration from there.

JUMP | 'Imagine the whole sky full of paratroopers'

Continued from Page A1

nois 4 and Airport Boulevard some time to clear and more people the chance to arrive.

The sun-baked crowd then cheered and clapped as the All American Chorus from the division sang and entertained before paratroopers dropped from two planes passing about 1,250 feet up.

Because the drop zone was only 12 seconds long, the planes made three passes, dropping anywhere from 13 to 22 paratroopers each time.

It was an impressive sight as the men and women fell from the planes until their parachutes quickly billowed into form.

"This is just a couple of planes," Anderson said. "Imagine the whole sky full of paratroopers."

Some veterans had children or grandchildren along and explained what the paratroopers were doing in the air during the drop.

Burl Cason of Fairview Heights said he made two combat drops in Korea during his service from 1948-52. His hat proclaimed him an 82nd Airborne alumni and featured miniatures of some of his medals, including two purple hearts. He said he actually had three.

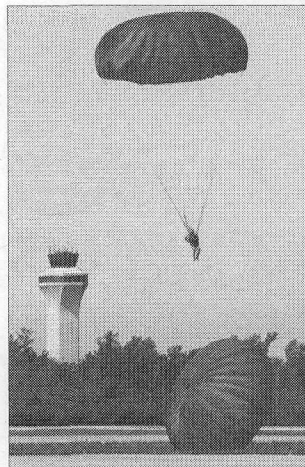
Jerry Blum of Belleville served from 1953-56 in the 82nd Airborne.

"Everybody was getting drafted," he said. "But if you were in something special like the paratroops, you had to commit for three years."

He said he didn't go to Korea but made 30 jumps, nine of them at night.

Mark Warnecke of Belleville served from 1987-91.

"This is what we used to



One paratrooper is down with another on the way near the airport tower at MidAmerica Airport.

call a Hollywood jump," he said. "You don't carry any of the heavy equipment. They're fun jumps."

Of course, that was what he said he likes to call "20 years and 100 pounds ago."

A few people had a special interest in watching the jump. Nancy Null of Florissant, Mo., was thrilled to watch her son, Kyle.

"He is just back from Iraq, and there is a lot of family he hasn't seen yet," she said. "He texted me to tell me he was in the second plane, second jump, fourth out from left door. We were able to see him with binoculars."

He said once you are out of the plane, you are just floating through the sky, preparing to land.

"The closest I can compare it to is scuba diving," he said.

82nd Airborne Division

Formed August 25, 1917, with members from all 48 states, the unit was given the nickname "All-Americans," hence its "AA" shoulder patch.

It became the first airborne division in the U.S. Army with the outbreak of World War II and was part of the largest airborne assault in history. Its members were among the first soldiers to fight in Normandy, France.

The 82nd returned to the United States on Jan. 3, 1946, and made its permanent home at Fort Bragg, N.C.

In August 1992, the division deployed a task force to the hurricane-ravaged area of South Florida and provided humanitarian assistance following Hurricane Andrew.

Paratroopers from the division have been deployed regularly in recent years to Iraq and Afghanistan.

There are 19,000 paratroopers in the division, conducting more than 3,500 airborne operations and over 250 heavy drop missions per year.

The typical paratrooper is 24 years old, jumps 12 times each year and runs 460 miles each

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Drug groups target Mexico's future cops

Five cadets slain in last two weeks

The Dallas Morning News

MEXICO CITY — Suspected drug trafficking groups are killing Mexico's future police commanders before they can even emerge from the much-touted academy that is supposed to transform them into world-class officers.

In the past two weeks, five officers-in-training have been gunned down while traveling to and from the Public Security Superior Academy in the central state of San Luis Potosi.

Analysts said the attacks were both a warning to the cadets and to the government, which is waging an unprecedented fight against drug cartels.

"These groups no longer have any fear that by attacking police there will be some type of retribution," said Mexico City police instructor Arturo Yanez, a former federal police adviser. "Their only limit is their imagination."

The attacks have sparked a partial strike by the nearly 1,000 academy students, who are demanding the right to carry guns and are calling for police roadblocks to intercept drug gunmen.

In an open letter to Public Security Minister Genaro Garcia Luna, the cadet strike leaders com-

plained that students have been left defenseless in the face of drug hit squads that operate in and around the state capital, also called San Luis Potosi.

"We are commissioned to San Luis Potosi to be trained, when in reality they put us at the disposition of organized crime," according to the letter, which was also sent by cadets to journalists. "Five of our colleagues have been executed in a cowardly and criminal act, unable to defend themselves since our superiors force us to leave our weapons behind when we travel."

The letter said the cadets are both first-time students training to be Federal Police and current officers from different law enforcement groups around the country. They are taking part in a one-year program designed to elevate the commander corps of Mexico's often-criticized police forces.

The striking cadets removed their uniforms while skipping morning classes, both as an act of protest and so as not to be identified when they left the academy, they said.

Still, they complained that they were easily recognizable in the capital city "because of the haircut that is required."

Investigation plagues Alaskan governor

Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska — Gov. Sarah Palin, a rising young GOP star mentioned as a possible running mate for John McCain, could see her clean-hands reputation damaged by a growing furor over whether she tried to get her former brother-in-law fired as a state trooper.

A legislative panel has launched a \$100,000 investigation to determine if Palin dismissed Alaska's public safety commissioner because he would not fire the trooper, Mike Wooten. Wooten went through a messy divorce from Palin's sister.

Palin has denied the commissioner's dismissal had anything to do with her former brother-in-law. And she denied orchestrating the dozens of telephone calls made by her husband and members of her administration to Wooten's bosses.

Palin said she welcomes the investigation: "Hold me accountable."

Still, the allegations she abused her office could prove embarrassing for Palin, who got elected in 2006 on an ethics reform platform.

"It could be a bit of a knock on the clean-government issue in Alaska she backed," said Shaun Bowler, a political scientist at the University of California at Riverside.

Referring to Republican Sen. Ted Stevens' recent indictment on corruption charges and the bribery-and-conspiracy scandal that has ensnared five former or current state lawmakers, GOP analyst John Feehery said: "Right now, in Alaska all you have to do is say the word 'investigation' and people are going to be running away."

Nevertheless, Palin is still riding high in Alaska, where she jump-started a project to build a natural gas pipeline and pushed through a plan to send every resident \$1,200 from the state's oil-rich treasury to offset high fuel prices.

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EPA Completes Review of Saugeat Area 2 Site R Saugeat, Illinois

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has completed a status review of the Saugeat Area 2 Site R Superfund site. The Superfund law requires regular reviews of sites (at least every five years) where the cleanup is complete but hazardous waste remains managed on-site. These reviews are done to ensure that the cleanup continues to protect human health and the environment.

EPA evaluated the ground water cleanup plan for the area known as Operable Unit 2. The plan is working and significant amounts of contaminated ground water are being removed and treated. EPA needs to review additional data before it can say the cleanup protects human health and the environment. That's expected to happen by December. The next scheduled review will be in 2013.

The five-year review and other information are available at the Cahokia Public Library, 140 Cahokia Park Drive, and online at www.epa.gov/region5/sites/saugeatarea2. If you need more information, contact:

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You may call Region 5 toll-free at 800-621-8431, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., weekdays.